THE OPEN SECRET OF NAZARETH

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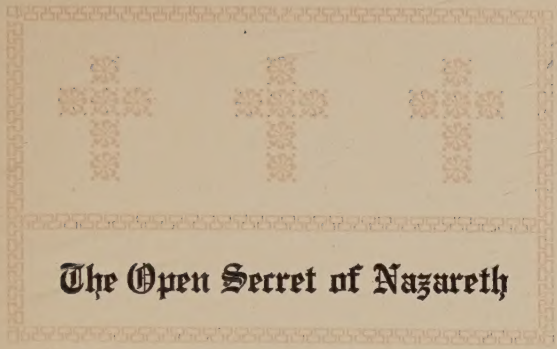
To my Friend

Howard N. Brown

from

the author

September, 1906



The Open Secret of Nazareth

A STREET IN NAZARETH

The Open Secret of Nazareth

Ten letters written by Bartimæus, whose eyes were opened, to Thomas, a seeker after truth

By Bradley Gilman

Thomas Y. Crowell & Co.
Publishers . . . . New York

53962

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Published September, 1906

To my classmate and friend

Theodore Roosevelt

Who exemplifies to a remarkable degree
in character and conduct the
principles here set forth

This
volume is affectionately

Dedicated

The Open Secret of Nazareth

First Letter

On Board the S. S. "Aurora,"
Mediterranean Sea, April, 1904.

MY DEAR THOMAS,—Holding to the plan agreed upon by us, I write to you my first letter. If my hand-writing appears more illegible than usual, know that this is due to excitement; because our captain, from the bridge, has told us that the dark line on the eastern horizon is,—as we suspected,—the coast of Palestine, "The Holy Land."

I frankly avow (more readily than would you?) that I am agitated by the news, although not surprised, for we have been eagerly expecting it all the afternoon; but the imminent fact that our feet are soon to tread the earth which *He* trod, that we shall look upon hills and valleys whereon *His* holy eyes rested,—

this fills me with a vibrant joy which is half a pain.

I can make out, in the distance, at present, only a dim, gray line, stretching from north to south, dividing the restless, sparkling blue of the fitful sea from the calm, cloud-flecked blue of the great concave above.

With my strong field-glass (for which again, dear Thomas, my warm thanks) I can faintly discern a thin, yellow line, edging the broad, gray band at the bottom. That, I am told, is the belt of sand stretching, almost in an unbroken line, along this low, level coast, from Beirut to Suez.

Already most of my fellow-passengers are making ready the little baggage which they will carry ashore; but I linger here on deck, tasting, like an epicure, this experience to which I have long and eagerly looked forward. I wonder if you would do the same if you were here. My situation reminds me of

the days, when, as boys of ten, you and I bought that marshmallow-paste at the corner candy-store. Many a day, with pockets empty, I had looked longingly at those sweetmeats as I passed, and had tasted them again and again in my fancy; but a day came when you and I marched boldly, commandingly in, and bought a handful. Alas, when the first velvety morsel lay in my mouth, I was so absorbed with the purely mental experience of possession that this quite extinguished the physical sensation of the taste; my self-consciousness shut me from my pleasure.

That is my condition at this moment of writing; yet I brand the mood as morbid; and I believe that the bustle and activity of landing and exploring will consign this momentary obsession to the dark limbo where it belongs.

I am thinking, at this moment, of the ominous words of a fellow-passenger who left us at Naples; he

was a thin-lipped man with a clerical collar and with the shrewdest of black eyes; when I casually mentioned my purpose of visiting the Holy Land, he dryly remarked that he would not travel there even if his expenses were paid by another person; and he added, as I looked inquiringly at him, that he did not wish to be "disillusioned," that he had certain conceptions of the land of our Saviour's birth, and he did not wish to imperil them.

Think of that, O Thomas, thou stern devotee of Truth! I confess that even I,—with all my attachment to the revered past, and with my dread of bare metallic facts,—was repelled by the man's lack of conscience, and his spiritual Epicureanism. No! whatever the impending week shall bring me, Thomas, I shall accept,—yes, welcome it, trying all the spirits, weighing all the evidence, and setting down faithfully and unreserv-

edly, in these letters, my experiences and my reflections.

Again I have risen from my steamer-chair, and taken one more look at the shore line. It is growing clearer; the yellow belt of sand is more distinct; the blue-gray band above it is now roughened by ridges and valleys, and the sky-line has become serrated where hill-tops rise into the blue.

O Thomas, my dear friend, my "faithful Achates," think of it! Think of it! I am really close upon entering "The Holy Land." My heart beats excitedly even as I write the words. The Blessed Land of which we have studied, and talked, and about which I have often dreamed, — that wondrous land lies in the near distance beckoning to me. How the sweet names, "Jordan," "Hebron," "City of David," "Nazareth Town,"—how they throng my mind, and arouse memories and hopes which dim my eyes with tears! I have dreamed,

many a time, of the hills and valleys of the Promised Land; shall I now find it, in reality, "A land flowing with milk and honey?" Or will it prove a wilderness only, where my soul shall wander and hunger, and my faith in God fade and die?

Nearer and nearer we draw to the shore. Our great steamship has slowed to half-speed; with lessened vibration, we glide forward, softly, silently, and I might think that we were stationary, and the unfolding mass ten miles away was gliding toward us.

The sea about us has changed in color from a deep blue to a dull yellow, and the great ship seems to move cautiously, as if scenting danger, and reluctant to move nearer the land. I wonder, Thomas, if you will understand,—and I know you will; you always did understand me, in my vagaries and fancies, although you never grew hysterical over them, as I almost grew,—yes,

you will understand me when I say that the fact of my being so near the land of Palestine has transformed, — to my senses, — everything about me. An hour ago, before I learned that we were coming in toward the shore, our ship and all its belongings, together with the sky and its clouds, and likewise the sea-birds hovering above us,—all were enveloped in one *aura* of the ocean; one day was like another; each day was like every day on every ocean; but now that we have learned about the nearness of Palestine, suddenly the *aura* has changed; all things,—sky, clouds, sea, ship, and even passengers, all have become transformed; or, rather ought I to say that the medium through which I see them has changed; yes, the very atmosphere of this new zone seems freighted with the breath of the East; I can almost believe,—but resolutely will not, O Thomas,—that already I can detect, in the balmy air,

spices of Araby and odors of far Cathay.

Ah, how remote seem Naples and Genoa! The experiences of even yesterday and this morning shrink away, ignored and despised, in the presence of this new light and beauty. How much of this moment's experience think you, Thomas, is genuine and warranted? I wonder if I would have felt this transformation had I not been told the fact of our proximity to shore. That fact, that announcement, I fear, was the philosopher's stone which has worked its magic on sky and sea and ship. Nay, it has more worked its magic on my soul; for after all, Thomas, I perceive, as I close my letter and prepare to land, that when once the soul is changed, by a new element of hope or faith or love, then the whole world alters. As you and I, in our protracted nocturnal debates, have often agreed,—it is the subjective element in life, and not the objec-

tive, which is the powerful factor in human destiny; "the life *is* more than meat"; and "to him who seeks,—and *finds*,—the kingdom of God, all things are added."

Second Letter

Grand Hotel,
Jerusalem, Palestine.

MY DEAR THOMAS,—I have really broken bread, in Jerusalem; or, to say it in more prosaic words, I have just dined at the "Table d'Hôte," of this hotel, and now write you about the experience of this my first day in "The Holy Land."

We lay at anchor, off Jaffa, last night; and, early this morning, we came ashore, in the customary reckless and perilous fashion. I wish you would get a guide-book (Baedecker is as good as any) and read it carefully, in connection with these letters; R—— has one, of the date 1899; that will serve perfectly well; a period of five years is a mere *augenblick* in the sluggish procession of these Eastern centuries.

Assuming now that you have read the usual account of the landing at

JAFFA

Jaffa, I will say that I am thankful I had the average athletic training of boyhood, else my body might now be reposing at the bottom of the Mediterranean, or I might have been ignominiously fished out of the water by a rusty boat-hook in the sinewy brown hands of a red-shirted Turkish boatman.

I speak, in passing, of the charming view of Jaffa which we had, as we lay at anchor, off shore. The houses,—some gray, some pink, some pale blue,—nestled, in an irregular picturesque mass near the beach, and with a glass I could make out human beings upon the flat roofs,—a strong reminder of so many scenes and episodes in Bible history; perhaps the most convincing Oriental touch was given to the picture by the tall date-palms, each with its bare, round trunk, and with leafy crown bestowing a circular benediction upon the highways and homes. "Exactly like the pictures," said one and another tourist, gaz-

ing from the steamer's deck, at the suggestive scene.

From the guide-book, Thomas, you have learned that Jaffa is the modern name of the Scriptural Joppa; and you have read what is said about the recreant Jonah and the visionary Peter. I leave the preacher of Nineveh in your hands; but regarding Peter I say that, although the house which is shown to the tourist as the home of "Simon a Tanner" cannot possibly be over three hundred years old, yet the "tanner-quarter" of the town still occupies substantially the same site it occupied two thousand years ago; so that the account of the vision of the beasts "clean and unclean," may be soundly rooted in fact, and may need only slight psychological interpretation.

It may seem singular to you, Thomas, and almost absurd, but the truth is that the objects which most impressed me at Jaffa, this forenoon, were the camels; "the lordly

REPUTED HOUSE OF "SIMON A TANNER," AT JAFFA

camels" seemed their proper title; I am told that they are of an unusually large and powerful breed; certainly, they are most majestic and impressive; and, as I have no reasonable doubt of the record concerning the building of Solomon's Temple, and the transportation of cedar logs from Tyre and Sidon, I fondly fancied, gazing upon these magnificent camels of Jaffa, that it was their ancestors who were honored with the task of bearing the great tree-trunks from the sea up to the "City of David." Certainly the haughty creatures seemed conscious of some superiority over ordinary animals, both quadrupeds and bipeds.

Of course, dear old school-mate, you will understand that since I am really seeking to come nearer the personality of the Historic Jesus, I was not so vividly interested in Jaffa as I shall be in Jerusalem and other places which He is known to have frequented; I fancy that

our Master may never have set foot in Jaffa; certainly there is little or no evidence for his having done so; and here let me remind you,—although I hardly need do it, for you know my position in this matter so well,—let me interpolate, concerning the theological doctrine of "The Essential Christ," that I shall have nothing to say of it; it interests me little; that tenet may become, on the one hand, an inspiring mystical ideal, or, on the other hand, it may sink,—and often does,—into a mere chameleon of faith, taking on various hues, and baffling earnest hearts. No, it is "Jesus of Nazareth" whom I seek; it is the "Chrestus" of the Roman historians for whom I search; I am led by the hope of making more real to myself (and possibly to you, Thomas,) that veritable person,—spirit clothed in flesh,—who walked and talked, who served and suffered, here amid these rocky hills and verdant valleys, two thousand

years ago. But this is a digression.

I can understand, Thomas, since an experience of mine this morning, how easily the guides of this country are led into deceit. I noticed a fellow-tourist, as he came up to the market-well in Jaffa; I heard him ask his guide, or dragoman, what interesting events were connected with it; and when the guide,—a mere lad of sixteen,—replied ingenuously that he knew none, the tourist was plainly disappointed; he had expended a great deal of money to take this journey to Palestine, and he evidently felt defrauded unless stories and legends were forthcoming at every step. I suspect that a more sophisticated guide than his would have responded to his evident wish by unfolding some narrative, more or less veracious, and would have "pleased" his patron at all costs, as these Eastern people like well to do.

Omitting many points of description, and referring you again to the guide-book, I hold myself to the distinctly human and personal elements of my day's experience. I know, so well, dear Thomas, that you wish to check me, again and again, and ask, "How did you feel about that new point of view?" Or, "What was the effect, on your religious nature, of that piece of information?" Yes, be assured that I bear always in mind your attitude of inquiry, and I examine and report and infer, always, in the light of our many midnight vigils over Strauss and Edersheim, Hartmann and Wernle.

On the exceedingly slow journey, by rail, this afternoon, from Jaffa, our train stopped altogether, as it wound among the hills, and the passengers alighted at a bare little station, and walked up and down, beside the cars. Nearly all the passengers were Europeans, and,—at least nominally,—Christians; dur-

ON THE ROAD TO CANA

ing that hour, although on soil governed by Moslems, the followers of the lonely Nazarene were in the large majority; so that I was deeply impressed at seeing a Turk then and there engage in his devotions; he knelt upon a little patch of grass, faced toward Mecca, and went through the prescribed posturings and prayers, as if quite oblivious of the restless Christians, around him, who jostled one another, and talked loudly and impatiently, and sometimes nearly stumbled over his bowed body.

I think that most of us felt, at first sight of his religious absorption, a prompt admiration for his devotion and his disregard of curious spectators. But my reflections did not stop there; I was ready enough to credit the man with sincerity and fervor and courage; but I asked myself if we tourists did not err in attributing to him a greater victory over self than he deserved; for I think this is true, Thomas, that re-

ligions, — like individuals, — vary greatly in the degree of "intimacy," (as the French say), of soul-revelation which they express in their devotions. Certainly, you and I remember, among our friends, persons who spoke easily, naturally,— even casually and lightly,—of their religious experiences; and other persons there were who revealed their convictions and aspirations only with reluctance, and after a marked struggle with their sensitive natures.

Have you not observed these two classes of religious people? I am not sure, but I think that you and I both belong among the more sensitive and less expressive group. My old friend and former college instructor, Dr. William James, has divided religious people into the two classes of the "Once Born" and "Twice Born"; and that classification at least roughly expresses the difference among people which I have in mind; the "Once Born"

devout persons speak easily and without self-consciousness about their relations to the Supreme Being; their words and acts of devotion seem natural to them, and seek no protective concealment; but the "Twice Born" repress, and stammer, and reveal their inmost regrets and longings only under pressure, and then with a reluctance which amounts almost to pain. As these two classes of devout persons have become more and more distinct to me, I have recalled the story of Adam and Eve, at first walking naked and unashamed in the Garden of Eden, and again walking, timid and self-conscious, poorly protected by their garments of leaves.

So I ask myself, "Is it a deeper sense of sinfulness which lies back of the sensitiveness of the 'Twice Born?' or, is their perception of the perfection of God keener and more exalted than is that of the calmer 'Once Born?' Does the re-

ligious experience commonly called 'conversion' bear upon the difference between these two classes?"

I know of no ultimate analysis of these two types of religious natures; but the kneeling, murmuring Moslem made me conjecture afresh; and I think that many of us who observed him, had we felt a degree of devotion great enough to compel us to our knees and prayers, in that conspicuous place, could not have risen, a few minutes later, as did he, with calm countenance, ready to chat on the idle interests of the journey.

Third Letter

Grand Hotel,
Jerusalem, Palestine.

MY DEAR THOMAS, — One long, full day I have been in this strange yet familiar city; and to-night my mind is more chaotic than when yesterday I came through the Jaffa gate. I started on my round of sightseeing early this morning. During the first hour I walked or rode, in a state of exaltation; I said to myself, repeatedly, "I am in Jerusalem; I am actually walking upon the ground which His sacred feet have pressed." And at times, when I looked down over an extensive view of the narrow streets and flat-roofed houses, my memory of Jerusalem, "The Holy City," which often I had imaged in my fancy,—flashed across my field of thought, and for a moment obscured the prosaic and even sordid scene before me. But, gradually

through the day, my vividly fancied "Jerusalem," the "Holy City" of my dreams, has become dim, as the coarser, harder reality around me has strengthened; and to-night I confess frankly to myself and to you, O "Alter Ego," that I recall the "Via Dolorosa," and "The Temple Area," and "The Church of the Holy Sepulchre," with no more excitement than I recall the "Bay of Naples" or the "Rock of Gibraltar."

You must not wonder, Thomas, at this sudden ebbing of my enthusiasm; certainly you would not wonder, if you were here. I recall, as I write, the remark of my sophisticated clerical friend on the steamer, who would not visit Palestine, "because he did not wish to be disillusioned." I can hardly say that I have suffered quite "disillusion"; but the readiness of guides to point out "holy sites" and to gabble Scripture, and the shock of seeing Turkish soldiers keeping order and

THE JEWS' WAILING-PLACE, JERUSALEM

peace at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre,—the very centre and focus of adoring Christendom, yet frequently, in the recent past, a scene of riot and slaughter among rival devotees of the "Meek and Lowly Jesus,"—these things have made a sorrowful impression upon me. I can understand that the common people, — the habitual residents of the city,—should be led to traffic in relics, and to profit by the blind emotions of pilgrims; but when I learned that the priests, Latin, Greek, Armenian, who minister at the altar of this most sacred shrine, are always in danger of breaking out into acts of violence and bloodshed, one against another, I seemed sadly to see the long toiling centuries of what I had called "Christian progress," shutting back into themselves like the sections of a telescope; and I felt, for a moment, as if I might as properly and profitably visit and adore the shrines at Athens or Mecca, as

the shrine of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem.

I fear, Thomas, that I am,—as you have told me,—an inveterate hero-worshipper; for I now see that I held, in my heart, as I came to this traditional scene of Christ's passion, the feeling that here I would find not only objects and places which would satisfy the sentiments which I brought to them, but that the human beings whose high privilege it was to minister here would be nobler in mien and more elevated in spirit than Christian priests and ministers elsewhere; but their faces seem hard and sottish, and although their brilliant raiment gives them distinction, when seen at a distance, they seem commonplace indeed, when off duty; and I observed one of their leaders, at a side door, eating and drinking in a most slovenly and gluttonous fashion, immediately after I had seen him moving, with impressive air and gestures,

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

before the altar in the Chapel of Saint Helena.

As for the site of the Temple,—"The Temple Area," it is called,—I found little there which moved me. The insolent Turkish attendants seemed to merely tolerate Christian visitors; and while I was struck by their greedy clamor for larger and larger fees, I could boast myself but little, as of a superior cult, when I recalled the "Commercialism" which is so widely and deeply permeating the Christian churches of America.

I think, Thomas, as I look back over this eventful day, that what most deeply impressed me, was the reality and intensity of the grief manifested at "The Jews' Wailing Place." You have read about it, and have seen the familiar photographs. The original is far more impressive than picture or description; and I think that you would have shared with me,—O Thomas, hater of ceremonials and doubter of

Scriptural authorities,—the sympathetic pain I felt for this oppressed and despised people, who here mourn, with tears and groans, the downfall of their religious power, even after many centuries have faded away, in a twilight of gloom and a midnight of pain.

As I looked upon them, dim and picturesque amid the shadows of their Sabbath Eve, and noted their fervent ejaculatory prayers, I gained new insight into the passionate religious temper of the "People of Israel"; and I understood for a moment, standing there amid the deepening darkness, how the providence of God, on its errand of merciful revelation to man, found a more direct and less obstructed channel through the pure fervent heart of a "Son of David," a descendant of Moses and Elijah, than it could find through the hysterical priestesses of Dodona or the perfunctory augurs of Rome.

In this real approach to "The His-

toric Jesus," slight though it is, I believe you will give me your sympathy. If you had been with me, today, in my tour of the city, you would have distrusted the "Holy Sites," and scorned the pompous ecclesiasticism, even more promptly and boldly than have I; but this suggestion of a purely racial potentiality I think you would have been quick to feel; for its significance lies in its harmony with that natural unfolding of lower into higher, in human affairs,—as in affairs cosmic and material,—which must always attract the thoughtful, sincere man of the twentieth century, trained to scientific ways of seeking truth.

I have not forgotten, Thomas, your former admiration for Buckle and his theories of civilization; and although I never could give to his views the almost unqualified assent which you gave, I firmly believe,—as the Greeks said,—that "Nature does not advance by leaps"; a great

religious leader is not likely to be born out of a merely military or speculative people; and, in my search here in sordid Jerusalem, in priest-ridden, Turk-ruled Palestine, for "Him who spake with authority," I have been convinced that the Nation of Israel,—individual, devout, passionate,—was such a people as might give birth to that "Holy One," whose most sacred shrines have been consecrated human wills, and whose truest temples have been aspiring human hearts.

Therefore, O Thomas, although it will be with a feeling of disappointment that I shall leave Jerusalem, in a few days, I shall depart with at least this attained; I shall have advanced in my quest by at least one step,—a step of negation and elimination; I have not come into the expected glory of His presence; I have not quite felt the thrill of life which could result from touching the hem of His garment; but I

have seen, assuredly, what He saw, and walked where He walked. And when I leave here, for Galilee, I shall depart, feeling that I have found the base, the pedestal, of my statue; and the statue itself,—shall I find that in Nazareth, the scene of Christ's childhood and unfolding youth?

Something leads me to believe that I shall come nearer to Him,—my heart's ideal,—there in the peace and serenity of unchanged Nazareth, than amid the superstition and greed of this half-pagan city.

As I close this letter, dear Thomas, the words of desolate, despairing Mary of Magdala recur to me, and arouse an echo in my disappointed, yet not hopeless, heart: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

Fourth Letter

Nazareth,
Casa Nuova Hospice.

THOMAS, DEAR FRIEND,—I am glad that I can write to you out of more joyousness of spirit than I last wrote. When I left Jerusalem I felt depressed,—not only at my own failure to realize, in that city, the ideals which my devout fancy had created, but I regretted being obliged to send to you, my silent absent partner in this pilgrimage, so futile and gloomy a report. But I resolved that I would hold unflinchingly, to our serious, even solemn agreement, in letter and in spirit; and the unsatisfying result you have seen.

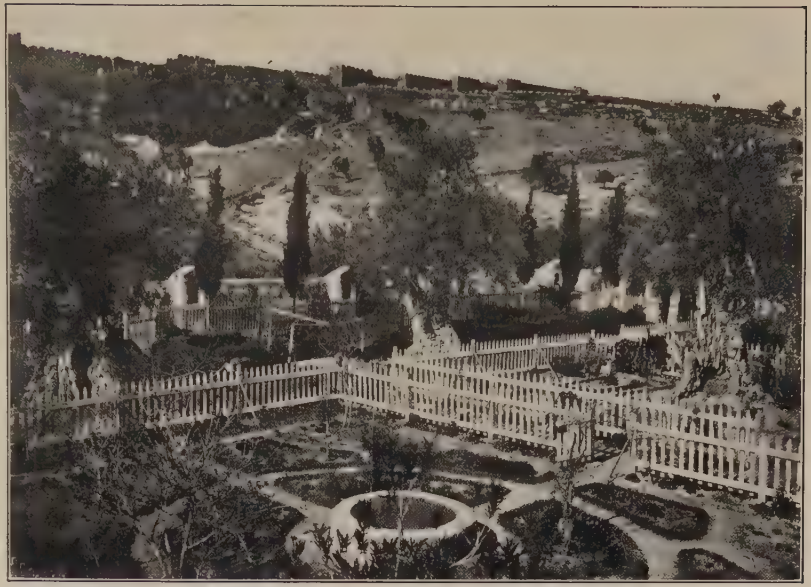
This letter, however, should bring you some joy in the reading, as it affords me much joy in the writing. Know, then, that I have found my journey into the interior of the country, from Haifa, a balm to my soul and a stimulus to my hopes.

The roadstead at Haifa is quite as Baedecker describes it,—no real harbor, but only a curve in the sandy shore, sheltering a straggling, flat-roofed Eastern town, and with the mighty promontory of Mount Carmel towering above. My hasty but pleasant visit to the monastery I will tell you about, when I return. I am keeping notes of many incidents and scenes which I will not allow to intrude into these letters.

On the journey over, from Haifa, I found that the places whose names had long been familiar to me awoke far more satisfying emotions in my breast than did the "sacred sites" in Jerusalem. I believe that the reason is because "Carmel," and "The Brook Kishon," and "The Plain of Esdraelon," and "Mount Hermon,"—all being parts of physical nature,—have suffered little or no debasing change at human hands,—devout or profane. At Jerusalem the ques-

tion of "identity" or "authenticity" turned upon some street or house or cave, some object which was quite at the mercy of man's transforming power; the Mount of Olives with Gethsemane, and the "Real Hill of Calvary" I find remain most prominent in my memory, out of all the objects and scenes I have looked upon thus far. But I must now class with them Carmel and Hermon and these others; for surely such features of physical nature have not materially altered since our Saviour's time; and I have no doubt that these sacred elements of the Syrian landscape, upon which my eyes have rested, were really gazed upon by our dear Lord, as He led and taught His disciples.

The journey across the fertile plains, from Haifa, was made by me in an easy day's journey. I am glad that I travelled slowly, dreamily, yet with my senses open to all impressions; for the recollection of



THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

that pleasant journey will always remain a bright panoramic picture in my heart. I could hardly repress the feeling,—and I did not wholly care to, Thomas,—that Nature herself was giving me glad welcome into the land of Galilee; the sky was as clear and blue as a great concave sapphire, until the afternoon, when a thin fleece of cloud overspread it and softened it to opalescence. The whole country seemed to rejoice in its abundant verdure; and the bright flowers, —anemones, poppies, roses, and tulips,—growing in wild luxuriance, appeared to sing their gladness, in exuberant emulation of the birds,—finches, thrushes, and the tuneful black-bird of Syria,—which filled the air with rapt, exultant melody. Both the beauty of the flower-strewn plain and the beauty of the feathered sprites of the air appealed strongly to me; both birds and blossoms seemed,—to my quickened fancy,—to spring from some

rejoicing Mother-Heart of Nature; and I took the day's experience as a happy augury of what was before me, in Nazareth.

Let me, however, interpolate this; —I said, a moment ago, that "I had no doubt," etc. Alas, I should amend and write, "no reasonable doubt"; for I confess that I am conscious of a sombre mood of doubt, a veritable canker of distrust, which was engendered in my soul by those days of disappointment in and near Jerusalem. I realize, more than ever, the truth which you and I reached, in one of our talks, that human doubt, especially on religious themes, is often a condition, rather than a conviction; I recall your illustration of the cup of quassia-wood, which embitters any water, however sweet, that is poured into it. That, I fear, is in a degree, the abnormal condition of my mind, at present; but earnest activity,—mental and physical,—is the remedy, as we agreed,

for the *mood* of doubt; and I shall not fail to apply it.

I have already seen enough, dear Thomas, since I arrived at this peaceful little hamlet of Nazareth, to make me feel that here I shall come,—yes, I have already come,—nearer to the real Jesus than was possible in Jerusalem. The houses of the village may not be identically the same as those in which Joseph and Mary and their relatives and neighbors lived, but they are substantially the same in form and location; the narrow streets and narrower lanes, winding up and down and around the concave of the town, probably are much as they were when He walked through them, bestowing blessings by His very glance. There has been no sufficient cause for the alteration of the original features of the town; Nazareth has not been compelled to pass through the social convulsions and political cataclysms which have blasted and reshaped, have razed

and rebuilt the Holy City; Nazareth lies in her oval valley, like a babe in its cradle, smiling up at the cloud-flecked heavens and the star-strewn firmament; and her obscurity has been her armor, her insignificance has preserved her pristine beauty and innocence.

I am hopeless about priest-haunted, war-desolated Jerusalem; I see no possibility of ever tracing the palimpsest record of the Christ, beneath the writing on her scrawled and blood-stained pages; but I fondly dream, Thomas, as I write, here on a tiny balcony of this Franciscan Monastery, that sometime, when the world shall be ready, when it shall have fulfilled its days of waiting, there shall be reared, here in this valley, here in this cradle of Christianity, a fitting temple to the world's Messiah, where there shall be no flaunting of priestly robes, no profanation by greedy relic-venders, nor even the light of a candle or the smoke of

VIEW OF NAZARETH

incense; but, into its silent simplicity and dignity, devout men and women shall come, from all lands; and, in grateful silent communion with the Sacred Past, they shall re-create, each for himself, that blessed Life; and they shall purify their souls by communion with that Eternal and Ever-Present Spirit, who is our Father, as He was also "God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Fifth Letter

Nazareth,
"On the Mountain, Apart."

MY DEAR THOMAS,—I am sitting here on this hill-top, back of the village, upon a ledge of rock, which His holy feet may have actually pressed. I will trust you enough to tell you that when I first came up here, I kneeled and kissed the rough rock, and my beating heart made itself felt against my side.

I am alone, Thomas, yet in the midst of my outer solitude I find that my soul entertains a guest; I do feel, Thomas, here on this rocky height, here upon this "mountain," up into which He was wont to "go apart to pray," that the centuries suffer subsidence, so that with "the inner eye" I look across them, and with quickened fancy I behold Him, I welcome Him, I sit at His feet and learn of Him,—yes, I, the most unworthy of disciples.

Here, upon this hill-top, He must have come, often, in His childhood and youth. There are those who tell us that He was not born at Bethlehem, but was born here; I contend with no critic, I waive minor points of biography; but surely it was here in Nazareth that the child Jesus passed through those impressionable and inquiring years wherein,—be it as a flash of illumination, or gradually like a softly increasing strain of music,—somehow the conscious sense of "God the Father" came to Him, and He was numbered among the prophets, and His high mission opened unto Him.

Let priests,—Latin, Greek and Armenian,—quarrel and rant, at Jerusalem and Bethlehem! Here in Nazareth, set in the midst of her fourteen hills, we come close to the marvellous incarnated Reality which lies back of all Christian history and tradition. Let critics pore over manuscripts, and prelates

thunder their decrees!—Here was "The Christ" born, here Jesus "came to himself"; here the Man, Christ Jesus, first knew Himself as Son of God; the physical birth was not of chief importance, for millions have entered this earthly life as did He; but the birth which was of the spirit,—that was unique, without precedent; and the place where that occurred, though unmarked by memorial, though unknown to the multitude, must always be,—"Holy ground."

My dear Thomas, sitting here as I do, far from you and far from the restless, eager life of Europe and America, I feel more strongly than ever, that our Western life is too intense, too surcharged with aim and energy, to easily understand the secret of a religion born and nourished amid the calm of Syrian fields and the silence of Syrian hills. Not that I attribute mysterious qualities to the Holy Land itself; I do not; I have declared to

myself, since reaching this simple hamlet, leaving behind me the clamor of tourist-sated Jerusalem, that Jesus could not have come to knowledge of God's Fatherhood at Jerusalem as He did at Nazareth; better might I say,—lest I seem irreverently to set limits to the Almighty's power,—Jesus was far less likely to have reached His full soul-effulgence among the sordid distractions of a city than amid the calming solitude of flower-sown valleys and rugged mountain-altars.

Here I sit, dear friend of my childhood and confidant of my youth, and I look down upon the white walls and open roofs of Nazareth Town, and recall the gem-like life which once nestled here, reflecting back to God a greater brilliancy than was returned to their Maker by the stars, in the pure setting of a clear Syrian midnight. Here lived Jesus through thirty peaceful years, while Greece was grieving

amid her ruins, and Rome was plunging to her downfall; and *cui bono*? To whom the good, Thomas, of His tireless patience, His uncomplaining endurance, His torture of body, and His agony of soul? How much did Jesus accomplish? How much of the world's destiny did He shape? How far are the so-called "Christian Nations" really Christian, after the high inexorable standard of the prophet of Nazareth? How much of the Altruism and spiritual altitude of the world to-day is due to that blessed life, lived here in Nazareth? And, on the contrary, how much of it is involved in the irresistible unfolding of the race, pushed by the will of God, beckoned by ideals,—now clearly and now dimly revealed to many leaders of men?

These be vital questions, Thomas; but you and I have always "marched breast-forward," holding our philosophic faith in Theism to be even more solidly based than

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our warm, grateful loyalty to that greatest of theists, Jesus the Christ. I cannot, in this brief letter, say all that I would wish to say on that theme; but I have somewhat to say, in this letter, and in later letters, upon a corollary of that theorem.

This, Thomas: Let me assume that the so-called Christian world is more pagan than we like to admit. Let me take for granted,—that which theologians and devout thinkers have often conceded and lamented, — that the influence of Christ's life and effort has not yet reached the fulness of fruition which it deserves; then arises the question "what is the reason for this failure?" This I ask myself, here in Palestine, more earnestly than I asked it in America or Europe. What did Jesus try to do? How far was He successful? And why has His success,—at least at present,—been no greater?

(Here I must close this letter; I

have just been summoned by a brown-faced, bare-legged boy, clad only in one long gray garment, to meet a learned Russian pilgrim, who is awaiting me at the Hospice.)

Sixth Letter

Nazareth,
On the Hill-Top.

MY DEAR THOMAS,—Here, upon this rounded, rocky hill, above the white-walled village, I feel my soul lulled and stirred, in turn, by the tides of the spirit; at one moment, a soft brooding peace is wafted to my senses by the serenity of the landscape, yet my heart quickens, anon, as each hill and valley seems to respond to my glance with a swift, glad message, "His eyes rested on me, on me." Is it only my fancy that under that penetrating yet tender glance of the Master, fertile Esdraelon, at the south, must have quickened into responsive life, and at the far north, proud Hermon, clad in pure samite, shone with a splendor before unknown?

Continuing, however, the thread of thought which I broke off so abruptly, yesterday, I wish to

speak of what I have come to call more and more confidently "The Secret of Jesus," or "The Open Secret of Nazareth."

The simplicity of this Syrian life, —both in village and open country, —makes a deep impression upon me; and, as I try to penetrate the meaning of Christ's message, and seek a sufficient cause for its slow advance in the world, I return, repeatedly, to this primitive mode of human life; and I feel that only in simplicity of human living can that revelation be understood which in such utter simplicity was conceived and affirmed. Men have tried, again and again, to break away from the complexity, the artificiality which has always dogged human footsteps, and has throttled the child-nature in the advancing race; William Morris, and your grandfather at the Brook Farm, and scores of names which I might cite, were all seeking to escape the thraldom of material luxuries. The great Aure-

lius declared that life might be nobly lived, even in a palace; so may life be simply lived even amid the labor-saving and space-annihilating inventions of Europe and America; but the simple life, it must be admitted, under such conditions, is extremely difficult; although complexity carries at its heart simplicity, yet the outer husk is tough, and the kernel will come to our children only after years of effort.

Out of the simplicity of this open-air Eastern life was the Christian religion born; and simple that religion must always remain, wherever taught or practised, else it vanishes. I am reminded, as I glance down over the village-life beneath me, of those pictures by Cranach, which played such an important part in the reform instituted by Luther; the painter placed his pictures in pairs; each pair was composed of a scene from the plain life which Jesus and his disciples

must have lived, and a scene from the luxurious, arrogant life of the Church's leaders in Cranach's time; the contrast was an unanswerable indictment of the official Christianity of Europe in the sixteenth century.

A similar condemning contradiction confronts me here, as I place this simple Syrian life, in my thought, in contrast with the greater part of the ecclesiastical life,—Protestant, Greek, and Roman,—in Europe and America, to-day. This life has remained what it was when our Master shared it; whereas the recognized church-life of the great Western World stumbles among pitfalls of worldly luxury, and strangles itself with cords of theological complexity.

Do not put me down, dear Thomas, as a misanthrope; for you know well that I am not that; but receive my thoughts hospitably, as of old, and perhaps we may come nearer to what I now call, with increas-

ing confidence, "The Open Secret of Nazareth." Do not think of me as carping, enviously, even for a moment; for the Nazareth light is scattering the gloom which descended upon me at Jerusalem; and the Truth which I am coming to "know," is "setting me free."

What I mean to convey, when I seem to be inveighing against the complicated soul-suicidal life of Europe is this;—I would not stay the hand of industry, nor blind the eye of invention and discovery; I would not urge men to hark back to the days of cave-life and uncooked food; it is not *what* men gain, but the *way* in which they gain it,—that is the most important factor; it is not *what* they do, but the *spirit* in which they do it,—that is the element vital to the Christian life, and is the element which is more imperilled by the complex life of Europe and America than by the simpler life of Nazareth.

It was one of Walter Pater's rare

sympathetic insights which made him,—in "Marius the Epicurean," I believe, — depict certain proud ladies of luxurious Roman palaces, when they embraced the faith of the Nazarene, as experiencing a revolution in their attitude toward the simple life involved in the conditions of the despised sect; they revolted against the complexity of their former life, and instinctively turned with longing to a kind which was more elemental.

But to return to the point where I broke off in my last letter.

I have my Bible, lying beside me here on the rock; and the book and the rock seem alike to hold their one secret in common; if the rock could tell all that it has seen and heard, or if the sacred volume could yield up its treasure of spiritual truth, then we would know, far better than we do, the purpose of God concerning His children, through the revelation of Him whom we call "Our Lord."

BETHANY

As I read, and read again, dear Thomas, the fragments of biography which the gospels hold, and as I reflect on the words of our Lord,—all too meagrely recorded, and inadequately reported,—I am convinced that His life of teaching, —considering that apart from His life of ministering to sorrow and suffering,—was a continuous effort to impart a secret. I believe that "The secret of the Most High" dwelt with Him; and His one great effort, so far as He appealed to the minds, the intellects of men, was to convey to them what God had first conveyed to Him.

In this respect Jesus differed from most of the religious teachers of the world; the priests of Isis, the devotees of the Greek "Mysteries," and most religions and religious leaders have been esoteric in their cults; they have named hard conditions with which their neophytes must comply; they have been indifferent to the wish or need of the

multitude; they have even sought to hide their treasures from the vulgar eye and ear. But how different was the method of Jesus! He offered his secret, without reservation; He aimed at giving what He had, without money and without price.

But, alas, He could not impart it; to but few, at the best; that is the sad reflection which haunts me as I turn the pages of the gospels. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!" That was the sorrowful cadence, in a minor key, which closed so many of His joyful messages of inspiring truth. Evidently He sought to tell the people something which God had told Him; and the humble Aramaic tongue was inadequate; as would have been, also, the most highly differentiated language of Demosthenes, or Cicero, or Sainte-Beuve. Among the prophets of Israel who preceded our Lord I do not recall one who seemed so eager to impart, yet so baffled in his

attempts to make clear His message; Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, and the Isaiahs, all felt the burden of sin which they struggled against; but their difficulty was in the flaunting iniquity or sullen inertia of the people, rather than in the people's mental and spiritual blindness; hence the prophets of ancient Israel offer but rarely that touching plaint of baffled sympathy, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!"

This is the point which I urge, Thomas, as I read my Bible, here in the light of a Syrian sun, and as I interweave, with my reading, glances at Nazareth and Mount Tabor, and at snowy Hermon in the far north,—that our Blessed Lord and Divine Teacher was exoteric and not esoteric, in His mind and method. That is not a wholly new truth to me; I remember when I first vaguely grasped it; you have not forgotten that strange man, Mohini, the Brahmin from India,

and our conference with him at Mrs. W——'s, in Boston. You remember how subtle was his charm and how fine were his mental processes; but you probably do not recall, as clearly as do I, what was his reply when I asked why he did not promulgate his beautiful ennobling ideas among the people at large.

His brief answer was,—made with calm, luminous eyes and softly modulated speech,—"Why should I?"

Ah, Thomas, there was the esoteric mystic speaking. That was the point where he departed, essentially, from the World's Greatest Teacher, Jesus of Nazareth; "Why should he?" and why should Jesus? And why indeed did Jesus seek to bring His secret to all, to even the humblest,—the humblest according to the egotistic world's standards! It was because "the Spirit of God was upon Him," and compelled Him to expression. The fire, which

God had kindled upon the altar of His heart, enlightened and quickened not only His own nature, but shone forth through the shutterless windows of His pure soul, radiating light and life to all about Him. Therefore it was predetermined, when He sent His apostles forth on their mission, that His exoteric command should be world-wide in its scope. "Go ye into all the world," He said, "and preach the gospel to every creature!" Ah, the esoteric teachers and adepts of the world never "spake as this man spake." There were the Quietists, for example; from famous Molinos down to the weakest and least renowned, they failed to exemplify the attitude of Jesus; they were esoteric, egoistic; and, in being that, they were but partially Christian.

Jesus had a secret which He fervently sought to impart; and the fallibility of human speech was not His only barrier; if He had been a jurist, He might easily have im-

parted statute after statute, and the world would have held one more Code, to add to the great codes of Justinian and Napoleon.

If our Lord had been simply a great theologian or moralist,—as many of His loving but mistaken expounders have understood Him to be,—His teachings could have been conveyed as easily as those of Hillel and Schammai, and could have been learned by rote throughout the world. But He was a poet and a seer; and His Secret was deeper than any which was ever taught in Sanscrit or Greek, in Arabic or English; it lay in a field deeper and more inaccessible than the fields cultivated by Confucius or Pythagoras or Sakya Mouni. Little wonder, then, that He struggled, with but partial success, to impart that Secret to all who would listen.

At this moment, Thomas, there flits across my mind the recollection of an incident far back in our

joint Sunday-School life; probably you have forgotten it; but I remember distinctly, — perhaps because of the shock it gave me,—a question which you asked the solemn, be-spectacled, theological student whom we had for teacher, one year. We were reading about the laws given to Moses, written upon the tables of stone by the finger of God; and you calmly and honestly inquired if God wrote those laws in Hebrew, and if He could have written them in Greek or Assyrian. A proper question, certainly, but it startled me, as it did the student-teacher.

Perhaps it is only a maturer expression of the same inquiry to which I am moved as I here ask myself, "What was the means of communication, yes, what was the mystic language by which the Almighty conveyed to His Chosen Son,—here perhaps on this very hill-top, — messages of Infinite Love and of Eternal Truth?"

My thought, as I think aloud, freely before you, my old and tried friend, runs thus;—that as cosmic ether underlies our earth's atmosphere, so the ether of God's spirit underlies all language,—not only spoken and written language, but thought language as well; and through that rare medium came God's message to the young prophet; it came as the light vibrations come through the vast void of the empyrean, in darkness and mystery, becoming light and light-bearing only when they touch our earth and its envelope of air. Thus the Almighty Father spoke to Jesus the Christ; and to Jesus the message was clear; but ah, how to translate it into the vocables of human language!

Seventh Letter

Nazareth,
Casa Nuova Hospice.

MY DEAR THOMAS,—I look from my window, here on the eastern side of this gray old monastery, and gaze upon the primitive life of the village; across the narrow street, in a carpenter's shop, a man and a boy are working, with quaint, simple tools, quite in the sedate, filial way in which He must have worked with His father Joseph.

Just beyond the level sky-line of the flat-roofed house opposite me I see a small caravan of Bedouin Arabs drawing near the village gate, coming to barter sheep and goats for the simple necessaries of their nomadic life. Picturesque creatures are those Arabs; many a dignified old sheikh have I seen, with gray beard and deep-set eyes, who might well represent one of the Old Testament patriarchs. I am

glad that we have such pictures as Tissot has given us, to correct the falsities of the classic painters; the German artist painted persons and places in Germany; the Italian painted those of Italy; the Dutch painted life in the Low Countries; and each offered his work as an illustration of the life, physical and social, which Jesus lived in the Holy Land; but the world's steady march toward truth demands, today, the more truthful portrayal of Palestine and the human conditions there found.

However, I stop my musing and take up the thread of my real message to you, Thomas. I must convey to you, as clearly as I may, in writing, my sense of the aim of Christ's living and teaching in this land of Palestine. I feel myself to be close to Him,—my Master, here in undisturbed primitive Nazareth; yes, my fancy so buds and blossoms, that as I gaze, in a day-dream, down over these lanes

PANORAMA OF NAZARETH

and alleys, I would not be greatly surprised to see Him, Him,—the centre of my soul's devotion,—moving, in serenity and sympathy, along the narrow street beneath my window, with throngs about Him, and the children clinging to His hands. If only . . . But stop! There comes a man,—a village artizan, I judge, by his dress,—who might well be Simon Peter himself, so firm is his stride, so self-reliant the poise of his bare, grizzled head, so bold the glance of his eye. I can see plainly the features of his weather-beaten face. Surely such a man was "Bar-jona" himself; his hands are knotted and stained with toil, yet his heart,—ah, how difficult for me to read the character of the inner man! How unable am I to see through the mask of the flesh, as He saw, who "knew what was in man." It was such a human figure as this,—strong, uncouth, intrepid, passionate, elemental, that our Divine

Lord looked upon, nay looked into, and called into intensest life the slumbering divine element hidden beneath so rugged an envelope. For, later, it was nothing less than a breath of the Almighty Himself which spoke through the passionate tribute of aroused Peter to his beloved Master, "Thou are the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

That was the quickening power which our Blessed Lord exercised over many rough and even sordid lives, evoking the divine from the human, summoning men from the death of monotonous, stupefying routine to the intense life of the present Holy Spirit of God.

But alas, all that was so long, so very long ago! Oh, Thomas, if only the Almighty One, who creates and governs the mysterious current of Time, would deign to reverse that current, would summon the Past and bid it stand as a substitute for the Present, — for one brief moment, that mine eyes might behold

Him, my beloved Master, I know that I would see Him, not as "unlovely, like a root out of dry ground," but I would see Him in His glory, and I would cry, "Enough! Mine eyes have seen thy salvation; now let thy servant depart in peace!"

Ah, Thomas, dear friend, I know you so well that I can see the smile with which you read that outburst. Yet the smile does not wound me, for I know the gentle, tender sympathy which you can feel for a temperament less reasonably consistent than your own.

So I will speak at once of what I call "The Open Secret of Nazareth." I will try to state what Jesus seems to me to have striven to impart, here in this village, and by the sea of Galilee, yonder, and at Jerusalem, lordly in her servitude, and dreaming of a temporal glory which never came.

The vital teaching of our Master is to be found, I believe, in His

parables. I will leave as wide a margin as even you, doubting Thomas, would wish, for distrust concerning accuracy of translation and authenticity of tradition; and I then have no hesitation in saying that the fundamental teaching of Jesus, —His "Open Secret," if I may so call it,—is to be found in His parables; many of His sayings which are handed down to us. Those, for example, comprised in what we call "The Sermon on the Mount" are the outbursts of a passionate poet and prophet; they are the spontaneous emotional utterances of a mystical nature, filled with the sense of Fatherhood and Brotherhood; and, although they have come down to us in a form which gives them the appearance of didactic intention, they are not the words of Jesus the Teacher as much as of Jesus the Poet, the Mystic, the rapt lover of Divine Beauty.

The one oft-repeated message of His life, consistent with itself and

harmonious with the inner continuous love of His life, was contained in the parables.

In the standard books on this subject you will find various classifications of those significant utterances of Jesus; but I place little confidence in such cut-and-dried groupings. Rather do I see, in more than half of the thirty recorded parables, the earnest attempt on the part of Jesus to tell His secret; and that secret was called by Him "The Kingdom of Heaven," or "The Kingdom of God."

By this,—if I may dare to say or even think that I have read His words with an understanding heart, —by the "Kingdom of Heaven" He meant no outward social order, no political re-grouping of human beings, no revolt against Imperial Rome and the raising of a new national banner; but it was an inner condition of each individual man and woman.

You are not surprised at that,

Thomas; and I hear you say, frankly, "This is nothing new, Bartimeus; others have said it."

True! But let me specify more exactly, step by step. This kingdom, I repeat, is not outward but inward; not of matter and material objects, but of the spirit. Very good; but of what part of the spirit? What element of subjective human life is the essential one?

Not the purely intellectual; not the mental, ultimately. For correct *thinking* about God and our fellowmen does not lie at the root of Christ's message; and, as I write that, I recall the Church Councils and Synods, the hair-splitting speculations of theologians, and the cries of agonized human lips on the rack or at the stake. All that zealous, cruel effort to direct the intellectual conclusions of men concerning the religion of Christ, all that frenzy for creeds was misapplied and was born of spiritual ignorance.

THE RIVER JORDAN

Again, emotion, even the highest kind, like that in penitence or aspiration, was not the end sought by Jesus the prophet-teacher; and I recall the waves of enthusiasm and the tides of fanaticism which have swept over Christendom, since our era begun; they were misconceived, Thomas, and were but indirectly related to the Master whose gospel they sought to advance.

No, Thomas, it was not man's thought nor his emotions,—but it was man's *will* that Jesus sought to convert; and His "Secret" was simply this: that a human being should will what God wills; this was the kernel of the message brought to man by that Holy One, whose "meat it was to do His Father's Will."

By direct revelation from above did Jesus, the great Son of God, learn that God's Will, streaming ceaselessly through the universe, is a force which moves always toward "The Best"; and "The Best," in

the physical universe, is man; and "The Best," in man's life, is Love; Jesus yielded to the sweet compulsion from His Father; He put Himself "In tune with the Infinite," as has been well said by some, and He willed good toward the men and women and children about Him.

Possibly, my dear Thomas, this exposition, thus briefly made, seems to you all too simple. Be patient! And open-minded, — as always! And let me unfold and explain. Perhaps there is more in it than you realize; perhaps the "Open Secret" is more elusive than you think; and perhaps, for that reason, the Great Teacher Himself found difficulty in imparting it, and used the many parables which we have on record.

Even Renan,—who ought to appeal to you, Thomas, more than he does to others of us,—even the famous and acute French scholar and thinker, in his steps of investigation and analysis of "The Life

of Jesus," falls short of the ultimate insight; he halts at the most important step. I have his charming "Vie de Jésus" here beside me, and I find him summing up the teaching of Jesus in this way: "Jesus often declares that the Kingdom of God has already commenced, that every man carries it in himself, and may, if he be worthy, enjoy it; that each creates this kingdom quietly by the true conversion of the heart. The Kingdom of God," continues Renan, "is then only the good, an order of things better than that which already exists; the reign of justice, which the faithful, each according to his ability, should aid to forward; or, again, the liberty of the soul, something analogous to the Buddhist 'Deliverance,' the fruit of freedom."

All of which, Thomas, is clumsy and shallow, as an insight into Christ's "Open Secret"; Renan only half understands the prophet

of God whom he tried, earnestly, lovingly, — yet often condescendingly,—to explain to the world. Renan's grasp on Christ's "idea" is loose; his comprehension is vague; he sees that Jesus was an idealist, and therefore assumes that he aimed to establish an ideal social order; when, in truth, Jesus aimed at the individual and not at the group. Renan sees that Jesus mentioned "The Good," but has not perceived that "The Good," as conceived by the Greeks and others, is merely static; whereas Jesus aimed at no static abstraction, but aimed to direct that active, urgent element in human character, which is known as the will; Jesus sought,—not "The Good," as Greece understood it, which is a mere inert condition, and a threatening stagnation; but He proclaimed "The Good *Will*,"—which is active,—ceaselessly constructive,—revolutionary,—and evolutionary.

The human will is as difficult of

definition as anything I know in the world; you and I gained much, Thomas, last winter, when we read Dr. William James's thoughtful work on that subject; but, in the last analysis, the will defies categorical definition, does it not? It is a living thing, like a strain of music or a flame; the piano wire which stands back of the strain of music, and the candle-wick which stands back of the flame, are things, material objects, continuously existent through seconds and minutes, whether or not the music sounds or the flame ascends; but the music and the flame themselves are existent only in action; if they cease to "do," they die, they are not; so with the human will; it lives, only as it acts; it "is," only as it does.

This is the subtle, elusive centre of the individual human life, which Jesus aimed to reach; He sought to make it act as the will of God acts, toward the progress of mankind, in widening circles of well-being.

Say not, doubting Thomas, that this is simple, all too simple. For I assert that the Christian Church has almost continuously overlooked it; the ideal Christ of the Church has nearly always been conceived as a passive Christ, as a person enduring and suffering patiently. Nearly all the paintings and the poems and the prayers of the Christian ages have assumed or directly upheld this negative ideal; they have misunderstood the "idea" of Jesus; and His parables about the pearl of great price, the leaven, the mustard-seed, and a score of others,—which, when they were uttered, fell on ears that could not hear,—have been read, since His day, by eyes that could not see.

But I must not weary you; and I somewhat hastily finish this letter, as the shadows of the evening sift into this peaceful little valley, and lighted candles glimmer in the doorways of many of the white-walled houses.

Eighth Letter

Mary's Well,
Nazareth.

MY DEAR THOMAS,—I have just come from the village fountain, at the eastern end of the town, where I have been watching, with profound interest, the wives, mothers, and daughters of the village, drawing water and gossiping, precisely as they must have acted in the olden times. There is no reason to doubt but that the women of Jesus' family came hither and chatted and laughed.

The Syrian costume, with its flowing drapery and bright head-dress, is striking and attractive. When I was at Bethlehem I was told that the women-folk there were famed for their beauty, which had descended to them from intermarriages of their ancestors with Crusaders; the head-dress of the women at Bethlehem is singularly ornamental, and

I think it has added materially to the charms of its wearers, and tourists have hastily ascribed more to the faces themselves than was due them; but my own judgment is that the women of Nazareth are quite as beautiful as those of Bethlehem.

Dr. Selah Merrill, our American Consul at Jerusalem, who speaks with authority, told me that he believed that the mental and moral quality of the Nazareth villagers was at least as high in the time of Christ as now, and probably higher; so that, as I silently studied the faces and gestures of the women at the fountain, I felt justified in my tender fancies and sentiments toward them and their ancestors. As to the well itself, there is no reasonable doubt whatever about its identity. The village has now,—and must always have had, —this one source of water-supply. So that I felt myself to be very near the Sacred Past, as I gazed

MARY'S WELL, NAZARETH

and mused; and I can take up my letter to you with earnestness and sympathy.

If I remember correctly, I said, last of all, that "The Secret of Nazareth," the "Message" of Jesus, was that each man and woman must will good toward God and toward man. In the elusiveness of the element of the human will, in its difficulty of definition,—especially among simple people who lived in this primitive land two thousand years ago,—in this lay the difficulty for the Great Teacher, of disclosing His secret. Not only was their experience limited, as listeners, and their vocabulary meagre, but His own knowledge of His own great truth was probably His,—not in abstract form, not as a philosophic formula, but as a method of life, a rhythmic theme of human daily intercourse, subject to limitless variations; He usually stated it picturesquely, in trope and story, after the Eastern fashion; when

He sought to use His briefest form of statement, He said, "It is within you,—this kingdom, this reign of love." The very Greek word, *Basileia,* kingdom, carries the idea of force rather than of passive condition; yet Jesus, when He sought to specify what part of the "within you" He meant, always broke out with fancy and imagery;—"The kingdom of heaven is . . . is like unto . . ."

One of the difficulties in the way of our Western minds' understanding the active transforming element involved in Christ's exaltation of the will is that the words "Good-will," have come, through popular usage, to have a mild neutral flavor of insipid acquiescence. Therefore, Thomas, I charge you, as you read, and whenever you read, from this point on, in these letters, the words "Good Will," understand them to mean the most active, insistent element in human character; and that is precisely

what Jesus sought to convey, by "The Pearl of Great Price," "The Leaven," and other fanciful expressions. In order for us to understand the dynamic quality of the "Open Secret of Nazareth" we who speak the English language must first de-polarize our words "will," "good will," "willing," and similar terms. I can recall a shiftless farmer of New Hampshire who often worked for his thriftier neighbors,—among them my grandfather; the inefficient fellow was always optimistic and noisily devout; and he was frequently described by others as "willing"; which meant,—in the New England vernacular, — even-tempered, and acquiescent in all commands given him.

Thus the word "willing" was used to mean the extreme opposite of its literal signification; it was transferred from its proper sense of activity, energy, to inert compliance and passivity.

In a similar way, most of us frequently say, "I am willing," when we by no means use the root "will" in its real meaning; for, as we use the phrase, we express no effort of will, but instead, entire absence of will, mild concession or compliance.

Thus I seek to make clear the true etymological meaning of the word "will," in order that you and I may better understand the depth of the "Good-Will" message which Jesus bore to the world, and that we may the more surely "have ears to hear" what He sought to impart.

Had Count Tolstoi penetrated to the centre of Christ's Secret he would never have affirmed his doctrine of "Non-Resistance," as a characteristic teaching of Jesus; for Jesus did not teach, and did not exemplify in His life, that innocuous negation; there are three possible attitudes, Thomas, toward the man who does you harm, as by theft or physical force: first, you may retaliate upon your enemy

with conduct similar to his own; or, second,—what Tolstoi sees,—you may dumbly and unresistingly submit; and, third,—what Tolstoi does not see,—you may return to him love for hate, benefit for injury, good-will for ill-will. This is the high aggressive level of the Holy Spirit of God, whereon Jesus stood; and any interpretation of His glorious gospel or His marvellous life, which makes Him negative and submissive solely, but lamely expresses His high and holy nature.

When I looked upon that singular drama, "The Passion Play of Oberammagau," I was disappointed, for a time, in the character of "Christus." But afterward, on reflection, I saw that the "Play" gave only one element of Christ's character, and gave that excellently,—namely, the "Passion," the submissive situations in His experience; while the dominating note, the vital element in that divine life, was quite disregarded, or barely

hinted at, as in the temple-scene with the money-changers.

Therefore, Thomas, I write with conviction and sympathy as I tell you that in coming to Nazareth I have been led into the light; I dare affirm that Jesus sounded the depth of human nature when he aimed to bring the human will into harmony with the Divine Will; indeed, shall we not say that when the Human Will wills good toward God and Man, it becomes one with the Divine Force which permeates and sustains and ever re-creates the universe; we speak of "Force" when we explain the physical phenomena,—gravitation, heat, electricity, and others; but it is all a part of the Divine "Will." That force which we know most directly, because a part of ourselves, we call "Will." Let that same word be applied to the movements of the "Not-Ourselves" as well; to the organic and inorganic world around us! Our springs of action

reveal those of our Maker; *our* "Will" explains *His* Will; the brutes also will and act, and therefore manifest God, in some degree; but their acts are on a lower plane than ours; and they less manifest the Divine Will; at the moment of human unselfishness, at the point of human will-action for beneficence, God comes most fully to Himself, and is re-incarnated. If you will look closely at the Greek of the significant passage in St. John's Gospel,—the seventh chapter, the seventeenth verse,—you will see that the more exact rendering of our Lord's profound words bears me out in my interpretation. For the original text evidently read,—not "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine," but "If any man *willeth* to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." There is a change of only a word or two, but the chasm between the renderings is wide and deep; the true rendering empha-

sizes the inner life rather than the outer; and it is in harmony with Christ's other affirmations concerning the hidden subjective act and life, as more significant and essential than is the visible objective life.

And that principle is the ideal of conduct for all individuals and groups of individuals. Moreover, it is a realizable ideal; such realization may be far in the future, but the world does move toward it.

Just here, Thomas, I seem to hear you protest; and if we were talking together, face to face, I think you would call my attention to the courts of justice and prisons, and other penal machinery of our day. But I am not at all staggered by such a challenge; I still maintain that the blessed "Good-Will" principle would work its way toward just and beneficent results, even among the idle, the incompetent, and even the persistently vicious classes. The analogy to which I

point you is that of the family; the principle which I urge,—receiving it from Jesus,—is the current of loving will which streams from the true brother or parent, the world over, toward the wayward brother or the wandering son. The true father is not he who meekly yields to every wish of the child whom he loves; but often he imposes penalties, he even inflicts pain,—suffering, himself, in the doing it,—in order that his child may be turned from vicious paths.

All this might a State do toward its delinquent citizens; we can fancy courts and penal institutions in full activity, yet all moving to their reformatory end, in an atmosphere of sad, reluctant, yet firm and tender action. There are individuals, already, who administer justice from the bench, or execute judicial commands in prisons and reformatories, with this spirit of good-will exhaling from every word and act, and it is only such

individuals who ever pass beyond the hardening, primitive position of the old Mosaic code, and make any real change for the better, in the characters of either casual or confirmed criminals.

I can see you, in my fancy, Thomas dear, sitting with my letter in your hand, and your lips pressed together, your brow furrowed, your whole face expressing honest dissent,—or, at least, cautious inquiry; but take my thought, take this idea of "force,"—beneficent if possible, but at least benevolent, (accomplishing good,—if possible, —but at least aiming at good, willing good), take this, and with it test the words of Jesus, so far as your critical judgment can accept their authenticity! Recall, for instance, the familiar words in "The Lord's Prayer," "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done." Notice the characteristic Eastern repetition of thought; notice the identity of ideas under change of words;

God's kingdom comes,—the kingdom of Heaven is born in any heart, — co-incidentally with the willing of good toward others by that person; which is an exercise of force characteristic of the Heavenly Father. If only the word "benevolence" had not suffered the "sad sea-change" which has come over so many of our English words, it would adequately express the exact idea urged by Jesus. To "will good" toward all of God's creatures is the kernel of Christ's teaching.

Recall, also, dear Thomas, the midnight song of the angels at Bethlehem! You may not follow me wholeheartedly in my fancy, but I behold in that beautiful story a prophecy, perhaps all unconscious, of the depth and scope of the revelation of Jesus; "Peace and Good Will to Men!" There is the happy augury of the unfolding life of Bethlehem's babe, sounded high above earth, and echoing down the

ages. Peace at the heart of the Christ and of every Son of God; and, radiating from that central peace, ceaseless energy; at the centre of the enlightened human soul absolute poise, like that at the centre of a revolving sphere, with motion, force, all about it,—that human force which we call "Will," pushing out in loving exercise toward man, in sympathy and service, and pushing upward toward the Father, in gratitude and trust.

Ninth Letter

Mount Tabor, Palestine.

DEAR THOMAS,—I have today made the ascent of this historic mountain; and I am sitting in the shade of a gnarled old fig-tree, half-way down the descent; the sun is warm,—for the month of April,—and the thick shade of the foliage above me is very grateful; blossoms have already fallen from this tree, and the seed-vessels are not numerous; my dragoman tells me that the fig-blossoms much resemble tiny figs; I wish I could have seen some of them.

The climb has been an easy one, and my dragoman has thoughtfully provided refreshments; so that I sit here and write, in comfort and ease, with two other tourists,—Englishmen,—a few yards away; little do they know the thread of my thought!

This symmetrical, bare eminence,

Mount Tabor, must not be confounded with the "Mount of Transfiguration"; the ecclesiastics of the Middle Ages so confounded it. Rather do I think that the site of that fascinating yet elusive mystical scene was on the heights of Hermon, not far from Cæsarea Philippi. There is no episode, in the Scripture record, which more allures, yet disappoints, me than does that of the Transfiguration. O Thomas, what fact, what soul-experience, what spiritual insight lies hidden beneath that strange,—and probably inadequately told,—story? Who can say? Sometimes I seem to perceive the hidden truth; and again I stand afar off, and accept my place among the uninitiated.

Since I sent my last letter, Thomas, I have conjectured much as to the reception,—intellectual and spiritual,—which you would give it. And I know the bent of your cautious, logical mind so well that

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I feel sure as to your point of divergence from my reflections and convictions. I remember how we were used, in the old days, to discuss that knotty problem of "Free-will and Necessity," and corollaries. I believe that you never quite satisfied yourself as to your veritable freedom of will; I, on the contrary, reached a point where the doubt of it no longer haunted me.

Therefore I know that you are saying, as you read what I write about "beneficent willing,"—or, more exactly, by etymology, "benevolence,"—that the old problem of human "free-will" underlies this "idea," this "Open Secret," which I attribute to Jesus.

So be it; but remember that your disbelief in free-will and my belief in it are both, probably, in some manner, results of our diverse temperaments; do not forget, old friend, also, that you are continuously and consistently acting on

my theory, instead of on your own. Moreover, I recall to you those fine lines of Tennyson:

"Our wills are ours, we know not how,
Our wills are ours,—to make them Thine."

How admirably that statement supports my position! And when I was on the steamer, Thomas, one of my fellow-passengers loaned me a copy of Tennyson's biography. In one of the poet-philosopher's letters to a friend he touches this problem of free-will in a masterly way. His friend has written him some question on the subject, and Tennyson replies that he does believe in a limited degree of freedom of will. "We have," he says, "the same kind of freedom which a canary has, in its cage; we can leap from one perch to another, although we cannot pass outside the wires of our cage."

I call that an acute and illuminating illustration, Thomas; and even grander is the suggestion with

which Tennyson continues; he declares his belief that "God chooses to hold His own will in abeyance, at that point in the periphery of His power, where man's will impinges on His Divine will."

What say you to that, Thomas? The whole universe is orderly, and cause and effect, (physical and mental), are everywhere operative, except at one point,—the point in human character which we call the will,—indefinable yet undeniable, tiny in scope, yet capable of revolutionizing,—yes, when in harmony with God's will, of evolutionizing the world still further, after God alone and unaided has brought the world up to the level of human birth and life and effort.

Tell me frankly, Thomas, in your next letter,—which I shall probably receive at Athens, if I hold to the itinerary which you and I laid out before I started,—tell me frankly if you think I am justified in my depth of feeling about this "Open

Secret" of Jesus! I admit that I am profoundly impressed by my conviction, but I hope that I keep my balance, and retain sound judgment.

I am simply re-inforced in my previous historical estimate of the greatness of the Christ by this my statement of the gospel He preached. In urging the consecration of the human will to loving service He was acting upon the promise previously revealed to Him from above that God is forever willing good to His children; Jesus therefore sought to state the harmonious working of man's will with God's will. The blending, in a man, of those two,—like the blending of two notes of music, producing a third, as Browning says in "Abt Vogler," — produces that human attitude of love, of the individual toward his fellows, which Jesus called "The Kingdom of Heaven." I do not wonder, when I reflect upon the difficulty of expressing

it, that our Lord could not more readily convey His secret to the dull minds about Him; but I am lost in wonder and admiration and adoration, when I consider the depth and range of the principle which Jesus grasped and taught.

At this point, my dear friend, I seem to see your calm, critical face, and to hear your dispassionate yet earnest voice urging an objection. I can fancy you saying, with forefinger resting gently across your knee, as of old, "You seem to confuse the act of volition with the emotion of love. In what relation to each other do you understand those two psychical phenomena to stand, as elements of Christ's teaching?"

My answer, Thomas, is this. The ultimate condition or attitude into which Jesus aimed to bring His disciples, as regards their fellowmen, was the attitude of love; which is an emotion; but the immediate step which He urged, the preparatory psychical condition, was

that of the active will; (which is a tautological expression, you perceive; for will is essentially active;) the will is the one factor in a man which can be commanded into existence directly; it is therefore the one factor which Jesus could urge and exhort, in His reformation and re-adjustment of the man himself; vain is any attempt to force the emotions directly; love cannot be commanded into activity, nor can hate or despair be banished by any fiat; those emotions, and all emotions, rise or fall, live or die, by laws of causation, often by suggestion, but not by any imperative laid upon them. The will, however, is more or less emancipated from laws of causation, it is unique, mysterious, uncaused, as was Pallas, springing fully armed, from the head of Zeus.

Listen closely, Thomas, for this point is nearly the subtle one which eluded many of Christ's listeners; (and I hardly need remind you,

dear friend, that I speak in all humility, yet as one under the compulsion of truth as he sees it). That Divine Teacher, with His profound intuitive mind, saw, with no training from the Greek philosophers, that the human will is the keystone of the arch of human destiny; He seized upon what Emmanuel Kant afterward sought in vain to analyze and classify; and doubtless our Lord shared, in some degree, the wonder and awe which we, with the great Königsberg philosopher, have felt in the presence of the insoluble "Categorical Imperative."

Again I say, the message of Jesus was directly to the will of man, and indirectly to man's mind and heart; the will was seen by the Nazarene Prophet to be the avenue into the man's character and conduct. If the man could be induced to command his will (by repeated concrete acts of volition) into well-wishing and well-doing, then would become established in that man the

emotion of love toward man and God; the man, by repeatedly "doing the will" of God, that is by definitely willing good thoughts and deeds, would presently "learn the doctrine,"—the teaching,—of Jesus; and the great "Secret" would no longer remain a secret.

Another matter, suggested by this line of reflection. As I pause in my writing, there comes to me the recollection of that discussion of ours, not long before I sailed. It was on "Monism versus Dualism," as the formula of the universe. The subject was much in vogue among clergymen and Doctors of Divinity, I was told; I wonder how they have settled it. This was the crux of the matter, was it not? Is human personality,—or, to put it more simply and effectively, each for himself,—is my personality an entity of itself? Or is there another personality, or are there other personalities, in the universe? Is the universe philosophically resoluble,—like the

seventy odd physical elements,—into three or four elements, or into two, or even into one?

That problem, being a problem of individuality, or personality, is a problem of the will; which,—and not the intellect or the emotions,—is the foundation of personality. And does not this "Open Secret of Nazareth" bear directly and illuminatingly upon that problem? Is not the foundation-truth of our life the truth,—not of "*Being*," but of "*Becoming*"? Is not the key to the riddle of the Sphinx,—"Action," and not "Rest"? Do not Monism and Dualism,—yes and Pantheism,—dissolve in the re-agent "force"? All three of them are "states" only, and cannot serve as formulæ for life, which is,—action, energy. Therefore I say that the world of God and Man,—for that is the whole world, these two divide all existence between them,—the one only universe, the world of spirit, is *a Dualism which is ceaselessly*

seeking to become a Monism; and it will forever seek it, through all eternity; the progression is an infinite series; man will approach God, through repeated will-acts, forever and ever; he will approximate, in beatific destiny, to Deity, yet will never become identical with Deity. The "Flying Goal" of Emerson is the Monism; the avenue of advance toward it is the path of Dualism.

All this Jesus must have seen, Thomas, walking upon these Syrian hillsides, and communing with God. How my heart goes out in sympathy and reverence for Him! Most of His hearers had not "the ears to hear"; they must have felt the warm, life-giving current of His will, as it was indicated by His sweet smile, His gentle voice, His tender eyes, bestowing blessings on all whom He met. They could not grasp all His teaching, much as they loved to listen to His persuasive words; but they loved Him,

and mourned His death, I know, and remembered His sayings and His deeds. A few, His chosen ones, grasped His meaning in part; but not one soul on earth shared His full thought; the neglect and solitude of "The Agony in the Garden" was only the momentary outer sign and symbol of His continuous isolation from full human fellowship.

But the sun is sinking, and I must return to my lodgings in the monastery. I must, however, wait to say this one additional word. You know that in America, especially,—and less in Europe,—it has become the fashion, among certain Biblical critics and theological writers, to loftily assert or assume that Jesus "never originated anything." Such critics point to the Golden Rule as the nearest approach of Jesus to originality; and they then cite Confucius and his "Do *not* unto others that which you would not have them do to you."

"There!" say these critics, "you have substantially the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, uttered by a Chinese sage, thousands of years before the Christian era."

Such a disparaging estimate of Jesus can be held only by men who have failed to see the exact point which Jesus urged; the difference between the teaching of Confucius and the teaching of our Lord was not simply a slight difference, as between an affirmative and a negative; but the positive precept of Jesus regarding our love for God and our neighbor is as different from the negation of Confucius as is light from darkness, as is pleasure from pain. In the Confucian negation lies inaction, stagnation, death. In the active principle of the Golden Rule lies the germ of ethical and spiritual reformation and evolution, and the guerdon of eternal life.

Taking such critics on their own ground, comparing Jesus, the

founder of the Christian religion, with the founders of other ethnic religions, I dare assert that He was the most original of all; for while they imparted systems and codes of ethical or theological thought, He penetrated deeper than thought, to *will,* the centre of all personality, divine or human; and He aimed to modify human wills, and direct them to action which should be in harmony with the will of God.

Further, Thomas, if I read aright the Scripture record, our Lord exemplified unconsciously, in word and glance and touch, the selfsame principle which He so earnestly tried to teach; I mean that His own poised, insistent will seems to have made a profound impression on all whom He met. You remember, perhaps, that incident early in Napoleon Bonaparte's life, where he entered the hall of the Directory. He had not yet had opportunity to exhibit his full baneful power; but, as he entered, all eyes were turned

critically upon him; he uttered no word, he gave no physical sign; but one of the leaders whispered to his neighbor, "I think we have found our master." There was some instant mysterious revelation of Bonaparte's power which went straight to the hearts of those observers.

Some such mysterious impress of our Lord's powerful personality must have reached all who met Him; although, of course, I need hardly add, in explanation, that whereas the Corsican tyrant's power was egotistic, centripetal, the power of Jesus was centrifugal, beneficent. It was this subtle impression of His will which made listeners exclaim, "This man speaks with authority, and not as the scribes."

There! The shadows deepen, the red sun is quite out of sight below the hills, and I must hasten, or I shall find the rough road back to Nazareth Town made even rougher and more difficult by the darkness.

Tenth Letter

Naples, Italy.

MY DEAR THOMAS,—Several weeks have elapsed since I wrote my last letter from the Holy Land; I have sent you several post-cards, in the meantime; and you have been informed of my route from Haifa to Smyrna, Constantinople, Athens, and here by way of Brindisi. From Naples I shall travel by easy stages, up through Italy and Switzerland to France and England, and then home.

I have been reading the letter which you sent me, after you received my several letters written at Nazareth. That profound subject of "The Open Secret of Nazareth" still deeply interests me; you do not commit yourself, Thomas, to entire agreement with my explanation of the life and message of our Lord; but I know that you have read, with

sympathy, all that I have so warmly written.

I note your cautious comments on my train of reflections, and I wish to reply to one or two of them.

You urge me to carry out my analysis of "The Open Secret,"—the benevolent and beneficent *Will-Kingdom,* — into more practical fields; you ask how a man, — a learned philosopher, or a humble artisan, or a confirmed criminal,—shall lay hold of this secret; how shall he know what to will? And so on.

I answer,—the knowledge of *what* to will varies with the age and the individual; it is philosophically the "content" of this blind but active will; it is the "variable,"—to illustrate from mathematics,—and the will is the constant; the two combined give the curve of condition and progress for the individual or the race. Your question, Thomas, is much like the old problem of conscience, with its two elements,

the "I ought," and the "What ought I?" The "Secret" of Jesus was assuredly a principle,—not of thinking or feeling, but of doing, of conduct; or, more inwardly, of willing, which is the root of conduct. That obscure but striking scene in the gospel, which we call the "Last Judgment," places the test, as between the sheep and goats, upon conduct, not upon empty words and idle sentiment. And I recall that passage of the Great Teacher's, regarding the sin of fleshly desires: "Whoso looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already, in his heart." There is the fatal culpable act,—in the will; for his will man is responsible; by its action he is to be judged, so far as is possible.

To come to more practical applications, Thomas, I believe that each man or woman, making his way through the world, in humble station or station exalted,—mak-

ing it by exercise of his will, in large strides or infinitely small steps,—each person, at such a step, has a choice, practically, between two decisions, rather than among several; the statesman or the merchant, the prince or the pauper, the saint or the criminal, each sees a higher and a lower at every cross-road of his life; the criminal's "higher" may be inferior to the saint's "lower"; but to him,—the criminal,—it is a "higher"; and the human will, at each of these subjective or spiritual cross-roads, chooses its higher, that is,—puts itself in harmony, for that moment and that moment only,—with God; the door of the kingdom of heaven is flung open on the instant, and may close, as instantly; it lives, it dies; "The will is dead; Live, the will!"

As I now read over that last paragraph,—having, in the meantime, been called out to arrange for a visit to Pompeii,—I fear that I am

not definite enough in my exposition. I remember that you often chaffed me, Thomas, about my capacity for "levitation" (not levity); so I must apply this truth of the will to the most concrete acts. And this is what I mean. Take my day's actions. I arose at eight; I looked out of the window; I noted the line of cabs and group of cabmen in front of the hotel; then and there came the choice to me of either looking at those men unsympathetically, or sympathetically; I could dwell upon their harsh voices and rough ways, drawing back from them, in my will, or I could reflect that they were seeking employment, earnestly, even anxiously, in order to support the wife and children whom they loved. Unconscious of me, they joked, and brushed their cab-cushions; but, up at the window, I was choosing, on the instant, the world of the good-will or the world of the ill-will, as my momentary dwelling-place.

The same choice I made as I sat at the breakfast table and was attended by the waiter; in my slight conversation with him, in that brief contact of his nature and mine, came the opportunity for the significant choice — of good-will rather than ill-will; of good-will,— not tact merely, not simulation, but good-will and friendliness; when I noticed that he had forgotten the hot water for my coffee I did not draw back, in my spirit, letting antipathy rule me, but I reminded him gently, patiently; and I thanked him when he corrected his omission.

Thus, throughout my day, which is nearly gone, I could name twenty, yes, forty points where the orbit of my conduct has intersected the orbits of other human beings; and each time I have had an opportunity,— great or small, important or trivial, —to exhale the fragrance of kindliness, or to surround myself with an aura of chilling reserve, or to emit positive hate. I fear that I have

failed, yes, have sinned, repeatedly, in these minute experiences; but such as they are, they make up the sum of my life, and, essentially, of all our lives; thus do we achieve our multifold victories of the will, or we suffer defeat, in the tiny arenas, with which each day is filled.

When I look back, dear Thomas, on my "Dream-days" (yet my dream-days of revelation), in simple serene Nazareth, I say to myself, again, that only in Nazareth and not at Jerusalem was Jesus likely to have attained His truth of the harmonized evolving will; for in cities there are fewer strictly personal forces to be encountered, and more impersonal social codes and legal statutes and class conventions to be confronted; if the young prophet had dwelt, during His impressionable, unfolding childhood and youth, in the "City of David," He would have been less impressed with the significance and determining power of individual human

wills than at Nazareth; in that little Galilean village individuals were the centres of force, and formal class-restrictions were but slight; in Nazareth the mystery and the marvel of a human personality,—and its central fountain, a will,—this challenged the insight of Jesus, and, when illumined from above by the revealed light of God, the Father,—must have unconsciously guided Him in his path toward His announced gospel,—which was not, primarily, a code for groups and masses, but a gospel for the individual, a message to the isolated human will.

Yesterday, an English friend, here at the hotel, loaned me a book containing excerpts from some of Gladstone's letters; and I had the good fortune to find, in one, (dated January 21, 1844, and written to his wife), these words—"There is a beautiful little sentence in the works of Charles Lamb, concerning one who had been afflicted,—'He

gave his heart to the Purifier, and his will to The Sovereign Will of the Universe.' But there is a speech in the third canto of the 'Paradise,' of Dante, spoken by a certain Piscarda, which is a rare gem. I will quote this one line: *'In la sua volontade è nostra pace.'"* In His will is our peace.

One other point comes to my mind, Thomas; that saying of Emerson's which both you and I have so often quoted. "Being is more than doing." Since I have entered upon the reflections suggested by my visit to Nazareth, I have more and more doubted the finality of that doctrine of the gentle sage of Concord. "Being" may indeed be higher than "Doing," because "Being" is assumed to include "Doing." But I seem to scent the death-odor of a hidden "Esoteric philosophy" under that phrase; and was not Emerson deeply tinged with the esoteric spirit of those Eastern cults which he so loved? Was he

not, therefore,—as exemplified in this phrase about "Being" and "Doing,"—somewhat at variance with the "Secret of Jesus," which was,—"Willing"? And was not he sometimes at variance with the fundamental spirit of this universe, which is,—not any passive condition, however lofty,—but tireless, upward-pushing energy? The inclusive formula, Thomas, which will express the life of this universe,—and man and God,—must be a formula of energy, and not of inaction, not of a state or condition. That was the profound perception of Jesus; and the root of His religion of "The Consecrated Will" pierces deeper than does the root of any philosophy, even as the tree of an ideal manhood towers above the dry weeds of the world's speculative systems; and it is the veritable "Tree of life" in our terrestrial Eden; yes, it is the open door of the kingdom of God, in the soul of each of his children.

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